

19 September 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : Reporting Tone

1. All of the statements made in the Memorandum dated 18 August 1972, Subject: OCI's Treatment of South Vietnam's Performance in Reacting to the Communist Spring Offensive, are factually correct. My difficulties are with tone rather than with fact.

2. I recall the use of the phrase, "lackluster performance of the defenders of An Loc". I recall the mood of panic that characterized the description of the situation in MR-1 following the fall of Quang Tri to the Communists and the low key in which the relief of An Loc and the seizure of the Citadel of Quang Tri were played. Had the North Vietnamese seized a provincial capital at the end of an 80-day battle, the tone would have been quite different. I had to write into the PDB the fact that major elements of 5 NVN divisions were committed to stop 2 South Vietnamese divisions from recapturing the city. This was done over mild protest from OCI. One would not have realized this fact from reading successive editions of the PDB. A simple comparison of the presentation of the fall of Quang Tri to the Communists and its recapture by the South Vietnamese illustrates my point. Bato, an insignificant district town gets comparable coverage with Quang Tri. I inserted into the PDB the sentence. "If the recapture of Quang Tri is confirmed, it will be a significant boost to ARVN morale." This was done over OCI protests.

3. I do not challenge the facts. I challenge the form and the tone.

/s/ Vernon A. Walters

Vernon A. Walters  
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Deputy Director